

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAM-01 OPIC-03 NIC-01 /068 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2114

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL ROUNDUP

REF: LISBON 1402

1. SOARES ON COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARTIES:

AT A SOCIALIST PARTY RALLY IN OPORTO MARCH 16, MARIO SOARES
STATED THAT IT IS NOT TRUE THAT THE SOCIALISTS SEEK A
"PRIVILEGED" ALLIANCE WITH THE PPD. SOCIALIST POLICY ON
ALLIANCES WITH OTHER PARTIES HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR ON MANY
OCCASIONS, SAID SOARES, REITERATING THAT HIS PARTY WILL RUN
ALONE IN THE ELECTIONS. WHILE ADMITTING THAT SOCIALISTS HAVE
HELD TOLKS WITH PPD, HE CAUTIONED THESE DO NOT SIGNIFY AN
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ALLIANCE. THE SOCIALIST LEADER SAID IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE IF THE

PRESENT COALITION OF PCP, PS, AND PPD WERE MAINTAINED UP TO AND EVEN AFTER THE ELECTIONS OF APRIL 12, REGARDLESS OF THE RESULTS OF THOSE ELECTIONS. SOARES, WHEN ASKED HIS OPINION REGARDING ENTRY OF THE COMMUNIST-LINING MDP/CDE INTO THE CABINET, SAID THAT PRESENT THREE-PARTY COALITION SHOULD NOT BE ALTERED ONLY THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE ELECTIONS AND THAT THE MDP DOES NOT REPRESENT A LARGE SECTOR OF THE POPULATION. HE URGED THAT THE UPCOMING ELECTION CAMPAIGN BE CONDUCTED BY ALL CONCERNED WITHOUT IDEOLOGICAL AGGRESSION OR VIOLENCE. REGARDING HIS OWN FUTURE IN THE CABINET AND RUMORS THAT HE MIGHT SHIFT TO MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO, SOARES SAID HE HAD ALWAYS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE FELT HE COULD BEST SERVE PORTUGAL IN HIS PRESENT POSITION.

2. SOCIALISTS SUPPORT COSTA GOMES FOR NEXT PRESIDENT:
DURING HIS SPEECH MARCH 16 AT THE OPORTO RALLY MENTIONED ABOVE, MARIO SOARES ALSO STATED THAT THE SOCIALIST CHOICE FOR PRESIDENT IN NEXT FALL'S GENERAL ELECTIONS IS COSTA GOMES. (COMMENT: SOCIALIST LEADERS HAD MADE THIS CHOICE EVEN BEFORE THE MARCH 11 ABORTIVE COUP.)

3. MRPP FEELING HEAT FROM AFM:
OVER THE PAST WEEKEND MILITARY ARRESTED EIGHT MRPP ACTIVISTS IN VILA FRANCA DA XIRA, ACCUSING THEM OF DISTRIBUTING PAMPHLETS ATTACKING THE ARMED FORCES MOREMENT (AFM). AT A RALLY IN LISBON MARCH 15 TO PRESENT MRPP CANDIDATES FOR THE APRIL 12 ELECTIONS, MRPP LEADERS WARNED THEIR FOLLOWERS THAT THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IS BENT ON MAKING THE PARTY ILLEGAL. IT DENOUNCED AN ALLEGED CAMPAIGN NOW UNDERWAY TO PREPARE PUBLIC OPINION FOR AN EVENTUAL BANNING OF THE PARTY, AND ANNOUNCED A STREET DEMONSTRATION FOR DOWNTOWN LISBON MARCH 18, APPARENTLY IN SUPPORT OF ITS 8 DETAINED MILITANTS. MEANWHILE 5TH DIVISION OF ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF HAS RELEASED A PRESS COMMUNIQUE BLAMING THE MRPP FOR THE RECENT WAVE OF RUMORS WHICH HAS SWEEPED THE COUNTRY (REFTEL), AND SPECIFICALLY FOR THE RUMOR THAT A U.S. FLEET HAD SAILED INTO SINES PORT AND WAS ABOUT TO LAND TROOPS. AFM REFERRED TO THOSE WHO SPREAD SUCH RUMORS AS "DISGUISED REACTIONARIES" AND ASKED THE POPULATION TO "NEUTRALIZE" THESE ELEMENTS AND COMBAT RUMOR MONGERS.

4. PPD DENIES CHARGES OF FINANCIAL WRONGDOING:
REACTING TO CHARGES MADE ON TELEVISION OVER THE WEEKEND BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LEADERS OF THE BANK WORKERS' UNION THAT PPD HAD BEEN FINANCED BY THE ESPIRITO SANTO SILVA FAMILY BANK, THE PPD HAS ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE CALLING SUCH CHARGES "MALICIOUS." THE PPD COMMUNIQUE STATES CATEGORICALLY THAT THE PARTY HAS RECEIVED NO FUNDS OR SUBSIDIES FROM ABROAD, BUT ONLY FROM ITS SUPPORTERS, SOME OF WHOM MAY HAVE BORROWED FUNDS FROM BANKS TO HELP MEED PPD EXPENSES. THIS IS NORMAL FOR A PARTY WITHOUT FOREIGN FINANCIAL SOURCES, CONTINUES THE PPD STATEMENT, WHICH URGES THE NATIONAL

ELECTORAL COMMISSION, THE AFM, AND MINISTRY OF FINANCE TO CONDUCT A FULL-SCALE INVESTIGATION INTO THE REAL SOURCES OF FUNDS OF ALL PARTIES.

5. ELECTORAL COMMISSION RESUMES WORK:

AFTER A FEW DAYS HIATUS, THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (CNE) RESUMED ITS SESSIONS MARCH 15. AN ATTEMPT BY MRPP TO EXCLUDE THE CDS AND THE PDC FROM THE CNE'S MEETINGS APPARENTLY FAILED. THE CNE REJECTED A MOTION TO THIS EFFECT, AS WELL AS AN ATTEMPT TO SUSPEND WORK UNTIL INVESTIGATION INTO THE MARCH 11 COUP ATTEMPT HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

6. OVERSEAS EMIGRANT CANDIDATES:

DEADLINE FOR PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES FOR DEPUTY REPRESENTING EMIGRANTS AND PORTUGUESE RESIDENT IN THE OVERSEAS HAS PASSED. ONLY 6 PARTIES OUT OF THE 14 WHICH ARE RUNNING CANDIDATES HAVE DECIDED TO PRESENT AN EMIGRANT CANDIDATE: PS, PPD, MDP/CDE, FEC-ML, UCDC, AND PPM. ONLY THE SOCIALISTS PRESENTED A CANDIDATE REPRESENTING MOZAMBIQUE.

7. MEDIA:

MEDIA COVERAGE OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NEWS SINCE MARCH 11 HAS TAKEN A DECIDED TURN TO THE LEFT. FAR FEWER VOICES OF REASON AND MODERATION ARE HEARD, AND USE OF WORDS LIKE "REACTION, CAPITALIST, FASCIST, AND IMPERIALISM" ABOUNDS. MODERATES APPEAR TO BE COWED AND UNWILLING AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, TO STICK THEIR NECKS OUT IN DEFENSE OF MODERATION.
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